

For Immediate Release

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Additional Case of Mosquito-borne Zika Virus Reported in Nebraska *Third Travel-Related Case in State*

Lincoln—A third case of travel-related Zika virus was recently reported to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. The person is a woman in her 20s from Douglas County who recently traveled to a Zika-affected country. She wasn't hospitalized. In February, DHHS announced the state's first travel-related Zika cases. One was in Douglas County and the other was in Sarpy County. Zika virus is spread to people primarily through the bite of a mosquito. Although the virus usually causes mild illness according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there have also been reports of birth defects and other severe health consequences.

"We expect to see more travel-related cases of Zika virus in Nebraska," said Dr. Tom Safranek, State Epidemiologist for DHHS. "If you're visiting an area with Zika this summer, it's important to practice proper mosquito prevention while you're there and when you come home."

Preventive tips include:

- Using an EPA-registered insect repellent properly
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants
- Staying in places with air conditioning or that have screens on doors and windows

The CDC recommends that pregnant women in any trimester avoid travel to any area where Zika virus is spreading. The latest travel health notices and information - <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/zika-travel-information>

"While there is no local transmission, we remain concerned about the potential harm from Zika virus," said Dr. Adi Pour, Director of the Douglas County Health Department. "You have a role to play in protecting yourself from mosquito bites while we learn more about this disease."

Eighty percent of people infected with the Zika virus do not have any symptoms. When symptoms occur, they are often mild, lasting from several days to a week, and include fever, rash, joint and muscle pain, conjunctivitis (red

eyes) and headache. While severe disease requiring hospitalization can occur it's uncommon. There are reports of a birth defect called microcephaly in babies of mothers who were infected with the Zika virus while pregnant. Microcephaly is a rare condition where a baby's head is smaller than expected.

Other fast facts about Zika virus:

- There have been 1,132 travel-related cases of Zika virus in the U.S.
- The primary mosquito (*Aedes aegypti*) that transmits Zika virus is found in tropical areas and the southern U.S., but is not established in Nebraska.
- DHHS started surveillance in certain areas of eastern Nebraska for the *Aedes albopictus* or Asian tiger mosquito which can also be a transmitter of Zika virus. This particular type of mosquito has been found in very limited numbers in eastern Nebraska previously. The additional surveillance will give public health officials an idea of how prevalent the Asian tiger mosquito is locally.
- A very small number of Asian tiger mosquitoes have been found in Richardson County so far. According to Dr. Safranek, this is not unexpected and doesn't change that Nebraska is considered a low-risk state for the possibility of Zika virus being transmitted here.
- Zika virus was first recognized in 1947. The first outbreaks occurred in 2007 and 2013 in the Pacific Islands. In 2015, outbreaks occurred in Brazil and other countries. Mosquitoes continue to spread the virus. Map of countries currently affected - <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/index.html>

For more information, visit: www.cdc.gov/zika

For advice to travelers, visit www.cdc.gov/travel